

## Message Text

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21

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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R 161945Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9721

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB CO

SUBJECT: GOC LEGALIZES FOURTH LABOR CONFEDERATION

1. THE GOC GRANTED LEGAL STATUS TO THE SOCIAL-CHRISTIAN GENERAL WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CGT) ON JULY 14, 1975. THE ACTION OF THE GOC CAME NEARLY ONE YEAR AFTER IT LEGALIZED THE COMMUNIST-LED TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CSTC).

2. MINISTER OF LABOR DE CROVO CLAIMED THAT THE LONG DELAY IN RECOGNIZING THE CGT WAS BECAUSE THE DOCUMENTS ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED BY THE CGT HAD TO BE REVIEWED AND REVISED TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW. TRADE UNION SOURCES TOLD THE EMBASSY SOME MONTHS AGO, HOWEVER, THAT THE CGT HAD EVEN THEN SATISFIED THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS. THEY THOUGHT THE GOC MIGHT TIME RECOGNITION IN ORDER TO SPREAD OUT ITS POLITICAL MILEAGE WITH SOME ELEMENTS OF THE WORKING CLASS AS A PROMOTER OF IDEOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN THE TRADE UNION SECTOR. MRS DE CROVO SAID THAT THE GOC ACTION WAS NOT DESIGNED TO "MADE A FRIEND OUT OF AN ENEMY."

3. THE NEWLY LEGALIZED CGT IS NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON THE LABOR SCENE. ACCORDING TO THE LABOR MINISTRY SOURCES, CGT-SPONSORED ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN HAVE NOT STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD AMONG THE WORKING CLASS. ALTHOUGH THE CGT CLAIMS 180,000 MEMBERS, THESE LABOR MINISTRY SOURCES HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE ORGANIZATION

PROBABLY HAS NO MORE THAN 30,000. THE LARGEST CGT UNION IS THE SOCIAL SECURITY WORKERS UNION IN MEDELLIN, WITH ABOUT 12,000. IT

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HAS OTHER SCATTERED UNIONS IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY, PUBLIC WORKS AND

AMONG FARMWORKERS.

4. CGT PRESIDENT VICTOR BAENA LOPEZ HAS CLAIMED THAT HIS ORGANIZATION  
FOUNDED IN 1971, OFFERS AN INDEPENDENT CHOICE TO THE WORKERS AS  
OPPOSED TO THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTC) AND THE UNION  
OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) "WHO ARE DEFENDERS OF INTERNATIONAL  
CAPITALISM" AND THE CSTC WHICH IS PRO-SOVIET. BAENA HAS DESCRIBED  
THE CGT AS OFFERING HUMANITARIAN SOCIALISM TO THE WORKING CLASS.  
THE CGT IS A MEMBER OF THE LATIN AMERICAN LABOR CONFEDERATION  
(CIAT).

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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